

WILLIAM PALMER AND OTHERS.

[To accompany Bill H. R. No. 560.]

APRIL 2, 1860.

Mr. MORSE, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, made the following

REPORT.

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the petition of William Palmer and others, asking for the passage of a law confirming certain payments made to them by the United States, have had the same under consideration, and report:

That in the year 1835 the annual pay of clerks to yards and first clerks to commandants was established at \$900 each. In 1853 the pay of clerks of yards and the first clerks to commandants at the Charlestown, New York, Norfolk, Washington, and Pensacola yards was raised to \$1,200, leaving the pay of the same class of clerks at Kittery and Philadelphia at \$900 each. The Navy Department, thinking the law raising the pay of first clerks to commandants and the clerks of yards applied to this class of officers in all the yards alike, estimated accordingly, and Congress appropriated for each at the rate of \$1,200 per annum, and this sum was paid these clerks at the Kittery and Philadelphia yards for about one year, after which the Fourth Auditor refused to pay over \$900 to the above-named clerks at the Kittery and Philadelphia yards, on the ground that the law raising the salaries of the same grade of clerks at other yards did not apply to them. The excess of payment was ordered to be charged to the clerks overpaid. Although your committee see no good reason why the pay of these clerks should not be made the same as that of clerks of the same grade in other yards, yet they will not now go further than to recommend that the usual sums overpaid them under appropriations made by Congress for that purpose be allowed.

In 1842 the annual pay of pursers' clerks at the Charlestown, New York, and Norfolk yards was fixed at \$500, pursers' stewards doing the duty of clerks at other yards. The pay of purser's assistant at the Kittery yard was afterwards raised to \$750; clerks of the same grade in other yards not being included, their compensation was left at \$500 per annum. But the Navy Department, believing them to be included in the law, made their estimates for \$750 for this class of clerks or pursers' assistants at Charlestown, New York, Philadelphia,

Norfolk, Washington, and Pensacola, as well as at Kittery, and this amount was appropriated by Congress for four years from July 1, 1854, and allowed by the accounting officers of the treasury, and paid to them for over three years. Some time during the year 1859 the Fourth Auditor of the Treasury discovered there was no authority of law to pay over \$500 to pursers' clerks or assistants at any other yard than that at Kittery. He therefore brought the salaries of this class of clerks at all the other yards back to \$500, and began to check on this small sum the amounts overpaid.

Your committee, believing the sum of \$750 per annum a very moderate salary for the service performed, recommend the passage of a bill confirming and allowing the overpayments, and establishing the salaries of pursers' clerks or assistants to pursers in all the yards at \$750 per annum.